

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the digital copying machine puts the print request on hold.

2. The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

3. The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

4. The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

5 5. The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein each of said digital copying machines permits the printer operation for the print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and
10 before being finished.

6. The image formation system according to claim 5, wherein each of said digital copying machines can set permission or non-permission to execute the printer operation for the print
15 request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and before being finished.

7. The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein
20 each of said digital copying machines does not permit the printer operation for the print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and before being finished.

8. The image formation system according to claim 7, wherein each of said digital copying machines can set permission or non-permission to execute the printer operation for the print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and before being finished.

9. The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein said digital copying machine executes the printer operation according to the print request, that has been put on hold, after the copy operation based on the link copy function is finished.

10. A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the digital copying machine puts the print request on hold.

11. The digital copying machine according to claim 10, said digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

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12. The digital copying machine according to claim 10, said digital copying machine directly connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines.

10 13. The digital copying machine according to claim 10, said digital copying machine connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines through a network.

14. The digital copying machine according to claim 10, which
15 permits printer operation for a print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and before being finished.

20 15. The digital copying machine according to claim 14, which can set permission or non-permission to execute printer operation for a print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and
25 before being finished.

16. The digital copying machine according to claim 10, which does not permit printer operation for a print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and before being finished.

17. The digital copying machine according to claim 16, which can set permission or non-permission to execute printer operation for a print request from the outside during the interruption when the copy operation based on the link copy function is interrupted after the operation is started and before being finished.

18. The digital copying machine according to claim 10, wherein said digital copying machine executes the printer operation according to the print request, that has been put on hold, after the copy operation based on the link copy function is finished.

19. An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying

machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

5 when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function.

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20. The image formation system according to claim 19, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

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21. The image formation system according to claim 19, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

20 22. The image formation system according to claim 19, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

23. An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

5 each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from
10 the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts
15 the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished.

24. The image formation system according to claim 23, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed
20 by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

25. The image formation system according to claim 23, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly
25 connected to each other.

26. The image formation system according to claim 23, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

5 27. An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy
10 function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

15 when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine displays a message to the effect that the printer is operating and also a menu screen used to instruct a following
20 operation to be executed, and

when Interrupt is selected in the menu screen, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function; when Wait is selected, the digital copying machine waits until the printer
25 operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on

the link copy function after the printer operation is finished;
and when Cancel is selected, the digital copying machine cancels
the copy operation based on the link copy function.

5 28. The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein
each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed
by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based
on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

10 29. The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein
at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly
connected to each other.

30. The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein
15 at least two units of said digital copying machines are
connected to each other through a network.

31. The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein
the digital copying machine dismisses the menu screen to start
20 the copy operation based on the link copy function when the
printer operation according to the print request from the
outside has ended during displaying of the menu screen.

32. A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine
5 itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy
10 function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function.

15 33. The digital copying machine according to claim 32, said digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

20 34. The digital copying machine according to claim 32, said digital copying machine directly connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines.

35. The digital copying machine according to claim 32, said
25 digital copying machine connected to at least another one of

said digital copying machines through a network.

36. A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications
5 can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing
10 according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts
15 the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished.

37. The digital copying machine according to claim 36, said digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer
20 operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

38. The digital copying machine according to claim 36, said digital copying machine directly connected to at least another
25 one of said digital copying machines.

39. The digital copying machine according to claim 36, said digital copying machine connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines through a network.

5 40. A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units
10 of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according
15 to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine displays a message to the effect that the printer is operating and also a menu screen used to instruct a following operation to be executed, and

when Interrupt is selected in the menu screen, the digital
20 copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function; when Wait is selected, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished;
25 and when Cancel is selected, the digital copying machine cancels

the copy operation based on the link copy function.

41. The digital copying machine according to claim 40, said
digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer
5 operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link
copy function to different paper output sections.

42. The digital copying machine according to claim 40, said
digital copying machine directly connected to at least another
10 one of said digital copying machines.

43. The digital copying machine according to claim 40, said
digital copying machine connected to at least another one of
said digital copying machines through a network.
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44. The digital copying machine according to claim 40 which
dismisses the menu screen to start the copy operation based on
the link copy function when the printer operation according to
the print request from the outside has ended during displaying
20 of the menu screen.

45. An image formation system formed with at least two units
of digital copying machines connected to each other, each of
which has a link copy function that a digital copying machine
25 determined as a master machine scans an image of a document as

an object to be copied and transfers the image of the scanned document to at least another one of the digital copying machines as a slave machine, and that said master machine and said slave machine share the job of printing the scanned document image,

5 wherein

said master machine has a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, said master machine interrupts the printer operation and preferentially executes the copy operation, on the other hand,

said slave machine has:

a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

even when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, said slave machine continues to execute the printer operation.

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46. The image formation system according to claim 45, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

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47. The image formation system according to claim 45, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

5 48. The image formation system according to claim 45, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

49. A digital copying machine as a slave machine connected
10 to a digital copying machine as a master machine and which has a link copy function that the slave machine receives an image of a document scanned and transferred by said master machine and shares the job of printing the scanned document image with said master machine, said slave machine having:

15 a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

even when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, said slave
20 machine continues to execute the printer operation.

50. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 49, said slave machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based
25 on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

51. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 49, said slave machine directly connected to said master machine.

5 52. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 49, said slave machine connected to said master machine through a network.

53. An image formation system formed with at least two units
10 of digital copying machines connected to each other, each of which has a link copy function that a digital copying machine determined as a master machine scans an image of a document as an object to be copied and transfers the image of the scanned document to at least another one of the digital copying machines
15 as a slave machine, and that said master machine and said slave machine share the job of printing the scanned document image, wherein

said master machine has a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and when
20 receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the master machine puts the print request on hold, on the other hand,

said slave machine has a printer function of printing
25 according to a print request from the outside, and when

receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the slave machine preferentially executes the printer operation according to the print request.

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54. The image formation system according to claim 53, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

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55. The image formation system according to claim 53, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

15 56. The image formation system according to claim 53, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

20 57. A digital copying machine as a slave machine connected to a digital copying machine as a master machine and which has a link copy function that the slave machine receives an image of a document scanned and transferred by said master machine and shares the job of printing the scanned document image with said master machine, said slave machine having:

25 a printer function of printing according to a print

request from the outside, wherein,

when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the slave machine preferentially executes the printer operation according to the print request.

58. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 57, said slave machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

59. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 57, said slave machine directly connected to said master machine.

60. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 57, said slave machine connected to said master machine through a network.

61. An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other, each of which has a link copy function that a digital copying machine determined as a master machine scans an image of a document as an object to be copied and transfers the image of the scanned document to at least another one of the digital copying machines

as a slave machine, and that said master machine and said slave machine share the job of printing the scanned document image, wherein

5 said master machine has a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the master machine puts the print request on hold, on the other hand,

10 said slave machine has a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the slave machine stops the copy operation and executes
15 the printer operation according to the print request.

62. The image formation system according to claim 61, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based
20 on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

63. The image formation system according to claim 61, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

64. The image formation system according to claim 61, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

5 65. A digital copying machine as a slave machine connected to a digital copying machine as a master machine and which has a link copy function that the slave machine receives an image of a document scanned and transferred by said master machine and shares the job of printing the scanned document image with
10 said master machine, said slave machine having:

a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start
15 to finish, the slave machine stops the copy operation and executes the printer operation according to the print request.

66. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 65, said slave machine outputting images printed by
20 printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

67. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 65, said slave machine directly connected to said
25 master machine.

68. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 65, said slave machine connected to said master machine through a network.

5 69. An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other, each of which has a link copy function that a digital copying machine determined as a master machine scans an image of a document as an object to be copied and transfers the image of the scanned
10 document to at least another one of the digital copying machines as a slave machine, and that said master machine and said slave machine share the job of printing the scanned document image, wherein

said master machine has a printer function of printing
15 according to a print request from the outside, and when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the master machine puts the print request on hold, on the other hand,

20 said slave machine has a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the slave machine interrupts the copy operation and
25 executes the printer operation according to the print request.

70. The image formation system according to claim 69, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

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71. The image formation system according to claim 69, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

10 72. The image formation system according to claim 69, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

73. A digital copying machine as a slave machine connected
15 to a digital copying machine as a master machine and which has a link copy function that the slave machine receives an image of a document scanned and transferred by said master machine and shares the job of printing the scanned document image with said master machine, said slave machine having:

20 a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when receiving the print request from said outside during the copy operation based on the link copy function from its start to finish, the slave machine interrupts the copy operation and
25 executes the printer operation according to the print request.

74. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 73, said slave machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

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75. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 73, said slave machine directly connected to said master machine.

10 76. The digital copying machine as a slave machine according to claim 73, said slave machine connected to said master machine through a network.